

The Magic Island, by Israel Shamir - The Unz Review

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Russia is under attack by the US and its proxies. This is a very sad development, for Russia is necessary for Mankind development. But Russia is in trouble not only externally. The other day there was a procession with the Holy Cross along Nevsky Prospekt in blessed memory of St Alexander of Neva. Right away, many self-styled “leftists” attacked the participants: *You are all fascists! Same as Nazis and Worse!* In my life I’ve seen this violent rejection of the Christian faith many times, and here are my thoughts on the subject:

I don’t know how posterity will look back upon my humble contribution to the study of “world anti-bourgeois thought,” but I’ll try to describe it in the briefest possible way for my contemporaries. Like you, my reader, I have the chance to live in an interesting era, an age that debunked Marx’s optimistic forecasts and verified the Revelation of St. John the Theologian. I saw the collapse of the Soviet Union (during those crucial years I was an Israeli correspondent in Moscow), the collapse of socialism, the rise of neo-liberalism and globalism, the emergence of a unified media space, the rise of Israel as the world’s third nuclear power, the rise of the Jews, the desperate struggle of the Palestinian people for their lives and dignity, the destruction of the natural environment, and the beginning of America’s Third World War, first with the Islamic world, and later with Russia. My task became to connect the dots between these seemingly dissimilar phenomena and see how the results impact the fate of the world. To do this, I needed a new narrative.

Let me explain what I mean with an example. Woody Allen, the New York filmmaker, released an unusual movie in his earlier days, *What's Up, Tiger Lily*. He didn't shoot a single frame, but took a finished third-rate Japanese movie and re-dubbed it, putting in a completely different soundtrack. The result was an original screenplay overlaid onto existing celluloid, a new interpretation of the original movie. If you have ever watched a foreign movie in an unfamiliar language on TV starting from the middle, you have faced a similar task, trying to guess the plot and comprehend what you have seen. This is a similar task to re-interpreting historical events from the additional knowledge and increased perspective of a later era. Individual events are set in concrete, so to speak, but they can be connected in original ways. Every storyteller offers his interpretation, and the historical consensus picks the narrative to best describe reality. Thus, over thirty years ago, two narratives collided in Russia; the Russian Soviet narrative and the Western, neo-liberal narrative. The Western narrative won, that is, for a while the Western Woody Allen managed to convince the Russian viewer of the rightness of his version of events. With such a simple change of paradigm, the Russian people permitted a terrible robbery to take place, and Russia's riches sailed abroad, leaving behind empty factories and transforming our great motherland into a second-rate power. This historical coup was made almost bloodlessly. The controlled demolition of Russia was proof that mastery of the narrative is mastery of the world. The one who can re-tell the movie becomes ex post facto its director.

It would seem that I have come up with nothing new here; the struggle of ideas has always existed. In 1917, it was not the Red Army that won, but a "scientific discovery": the international ideology of communism. Ever since, a continuous wave of corporate science has continued to conquer the great minds of the world. This could not have happened as long as there was a healthy society, as long as people communicated with each other and freely

discussed pressing issues. Unfortunately, the technologies we use have been designed to cancel original thinkers. Never before has the media been so concentrated in the hand of so few, on a global scale, to the point where each of us is enveloped in a cocoon of virtual, alternative reality. In the West, firstly in America and secondly in Russia, a society of total disunity has emerged, in which people form their opinions solely on the basis of television and mainstream media. Transnational media empires have completely taken over all public discourse and have convinced billions of people that the “American way of life” (neo-liberalism) brings them happiness.

From lofty control rooms atop their global monopoly, the media masters determine what people in a fragmented and fragmenting society know and talk about. They decide what people are thinking, and within what historical framework. My senior comrades Noam Chomsky, Edward Herman and other authors have written extensively about this scientific manufacture of consent. I too have noticed this amazing invisible power, something like a vast magnetic mountain that actively interferes in the internal life of many countries. The media everywhere pursues the same line: **against** nationalism and tradition, pushing instead for a “multi-cultural society”, for liberal democracy -that is, for a society of separation, in which it is easier for them to act. With ONE exception. In the case of the Jewish state, they support chauvinism, separatism, apartheid, that is, an insular society of cultural solidarity. Everywhere else they are in favor of *wokes*, but in Israel they are in favor of skinheads.

Another interesting exception: the founders of communism believed that religion was part of the *class society*, serving the ruling elites. However, contrary to the postulates of communist social science, transnational capital is consistently directed *against* religion, and especially against the Christian

religion. Isn't it interesting that both the choices we have been given (International Communism vs Transnational Neoliberalism) oppose the Church? All three ancient, often feuding, branches of Christianity are under continuous attack: Western Catholicism, Byzantine Orthodoxy, and Islam (a special form of monophysite Eastern Christianity). But the one exception? Judaism is untouchable. Not only has the orchestrated attack against all religion avoided Judaism, but in the West, a new form of Triumphalist Judaism has emerged, **Holocaustianity**, whose main temple stands in the center of Washington DC. This death cult perverts the Christian religion: the death of the Jews is equated with the Passion of Christ, and the creation of the state of Israel corresponds to the Resurrection.

But this is where the similarity ends. Christianity is not protected by law, and on the streets of Paris and New York you can see posters with crosses growing into Nazi swastikas. The Holocaust cult is strictly protected by law. Teachers are not allowed to take children to church, but attendance at the local Holocaust shrine is required by state curriculum. Scientific racism is no longer fashionable, but the people understand which races have a favored status and which do not. In Moscow they refuse to rent apartments to people from the Caucasus, in New York to blacks, and in Europe there is a growing opposition to Islamic immigrants. The last vestiges of scientific racism remain in the hearts of government officials, permitting Biden to bomb Yemen as though he was disinfecting it. But anti-Semitism, once considered a form of racism, has not just been outlawed, it has raised up into the place formerly held by "anti-Sovietism" in the Soviet Union and "anti-Americanism" in America. To me, the son of Esther and Joseph, this is certainly heartening, but it makes me wonder about the reasons behind such an obvious, anomalous exception.

The destruction of the natural environment, our sweet Earth, has become another strange feature of the modern world. Everywhere the new lords of the world are poisoning rivers, cutting down forests, and making the Earth uninhabitable. Using the Russian scientist Lev Gumilev's terminology, we can say that the *anthropogenic (man-made) landscape* is more and more decisively replacing the natural landscapes of the planet. The earth is plundered, disfigured, and then coated with urban sprawl. Together with the death of the spirit, the coordinated attack on faith, the profanation of art and love, and the rejection of human brotherhood, the death of nature emphasizes the apocalyptic essence behind the actions of our global rulers. We can see now that history has culminated in an existential crisis. At such critical moments, history itself must be reinterpreted to explain current reality.

The classic Marxist interpretation of history held that domination over the means of production determined the position of the classes. It claimed that factory owners decided, against the interest of the workers, where society would go. But the amazing new inventions of the international neoliberal financiers, who employ derivatives and secondary financial instruments instead of workers, have dramatically downgraded the power of the means of production. Every dollar of factory value can now be inflated 99 times through the use of secondary financial instruments sold on the international exchanges. But the value of these financial gimmicks depend largely upon their reputation as judged by the international press. In such a situation, the main and decisive role passes from the hands of the workers and factory owners to the Masters of Discourse, i.e. the owners of the mass media, leading journalists, university professors, experts – all of whom are selectively supported by international financial capital.

According to classical theory, they should primarily serve the needs of factory owners and secondarily their workers, but we can all see that they serve only themselves. They act more like foreign invaders or even space aliens. They exhibit a degree of sovereignty unmatched in human history. Factory work is much preferable to what they are selling, which is nothing short of Huxley's *Brave New World*. While Marxists struggled for the means of production, these days we struggle over ideas, indeed for the very minds and souls of people. Free thinkers find themselves directly grappling with the Masters of Discourse, our new opponents. This virtual struggle is no less real than the popular demonstrations of old. The power of the boycott is still in the hands of the individual, and now (thanks to the repackaging and financialization of products) has 99 times the power it ever had. The anomalies we have noted above point to the Achilles' heel of our opponents: Israel. Thus, although they continue to misdirect us and put up smoke screens, the **Jewish Question** is back on the agenda.

To explain this paradoxical conclusion, we can think of theology as the primary form of ideology. Christianity, with its spiritual quest and its earthly cult of the Virgin Mary, with the idea of human brotherhood expressed in communion, despite its concessions to the powers that be, is a perfectly positive, humanistic solidarity ideology. Judaism, on the other hand, the religion of the man-made landscape, the Chosenness of the elect, the rejection of the categorical imperative, represents the theology behind neo-liberalism. Christians see people as neighbors, Jews see people as tools of empire. Israeli exceptionalism, the high status of the Holocaust cult, and the preeminent position of international finance are all symptoms of a modern sickness that point to one particular cause.

I have lived a good part of my life in Israel, this tiny state in the Middle East. At first I found myself writing from the hinterland, and my stories concerned the growing backwardness, racism against the locals, and the growing hatred of “goyim.” But our local problems were, until recently, of little concern to anyone. Today, however, Israel sits at the center of world events. For reasons that we will discuss in an upcoming book, there has been an entanglement of comprador forces in Russia, imperial-capitalist forces in America, their allies in Europe, and apartheid supporters in Palestine. Therefore, my personal front, the struggle against apartheid in Palestine, has become simultaneously the front line of the struggle against the Russian compradors, and against American imperialism in its newly-fashionable form of globalism. This intertwining of forces is an extraordinary historical knot, and by cutting it we will end the brutality of global capitalism.

Palestine has become the Magic Island of Russian fairy tales, where there is an iron chest chained to the branches of an ancient oak, and an egg is kept in a chest, and in that egg there is a needle and on the tip of that needle is the life of the Eternal Enemy, the very Spirit of International Capitalism that is killing us. Suddenly we find that we have within our grasp a sure method of eliminating the Enemy in one fell swoop, without any great battles or bloodshed. **Democracy in Palestine as originally envisaged by the Palestine Mandate.** The transformation of the apartheid state into a country of equality and democracy will knock the ground out from under the enemy’s feet. It is true that the idea of democracy was used as a ruse by our enemy to crush the world with neo-liberal vulture capitalism, but there’s nothing essentially wrong with the will of the people. It can and must be turned against the enemy.

On that Magic Island of Palestine, that birthplace of Christianity, is stored the source of the spiritual life of Russia and the West. Though the West may now think of Israel as an aircraft carrier, or the Middle East as a vast gas station, the connections between Russia and Palestine are still fresh. From Palestine came Orthodoxy, which still unites Moscow and Jerusalem. The indigenous population of Nazareth and Bethlehem professes the same faith as Ryazan and Kostroma. Moscow, the successor of Byzantium, the Third Rome, carries out its important historical mission as the defender of Orthodoxy, the protector of the indigenous people of Palestine. The Russian people remembered this in the 19th century when together they collected their rubles and built churches and schools in the Holy Land. Soviet Russians remembered it too, when they protected Palestinians from Israel's incremental genocide. Since then, every other Palestinian doctor and every second Palestinian priest speaks Russian.

The connection between Christian nations and Palestine is more than a relic of history. Christianity is one of the world's great solidarity ideologies. Like communism, it puts first the pursuit of spirituality and brotherhood on earth. Like communism, Christianity has never achieved its lofty ideals. Both the religion and the ideology suffered from pundits and careerists. Both have lost the respect of polite society. But the Christian faith, like communism, is like Antaeus: it is awakened by defeat. All we have to do is unclench the dead grip of power-lovers, expel those people who turned their Communist Party membership or Holy Cross into the means of making money, and revive the kingdom of the spirit! Having lived in both, it is my experience that both Orthodox Russia and Soviet Russia were equally distinguished by their high and invincible spirituality.

The supporters of apartheid in Palestine have given themselves a sinister task: **to cut off the roots of Christianity.** That is why they besieged the Church of

the Nativity, destroyed ancient Byzantine churches, burned the Gospels, and expelled Christian believers. They incited a mass exodus of Jewish Russians from the Soviet Union to Israel. The organizers intended to kill two birds with one stone: to undermine the Soviet Union with the panic flight of intellectuals, and at the same time to strengthen their power in the Holy Land. But their calculations have backfired. Judaism's separatism is repellent to all men of good will. Although the state apparatus of Israel officially and brutally opposes Christians, the Russian spirit has shown that it cannot be long separated from Christ. It is not without reason that the Orthodox churches in Lydda and Jaffa, emptied after the expulsion of the Palestinians, are once again full of believers. Many former Russians have found their way to the Holy Land of the Spirit. The separatist state of Israel is faced with an inversion of the "Converso Crisis", where the third and fourth generations are refusing to hate, torture and rob their neighbors. No Jewish kingdom ever lasted more than 80 years. There is a natural limit to separatism.

History is not over, and Israeli immigrants can play a positive role in Palestine, if they realize their brotherhood with the Palestinian people. Palestine is like a rope pulled by two opposing sides. If the spirit of brotherhood prevails, the Third Rome will rise; if the spirit of Chosenness prevails, the Iron Heel will reign over the world. The future is unpredictable because humanity finds itself standing at the crossroads of history. If we turn one way, we lose our horse; if we turn the other, we lose our soul. The role that Russia is destined to play in this decisive battle is unexpectedly great. As Mackinder pointed out, she is the pivot of the world. But, as long as the White Virgin of the Intercession rises over the clear stream of the Nerli River, as long as the Red Mausoleum stands under the crenellated wall of the Kremlin, as long as the birch trees keep rustling over the Oka River, Russia is invincible – and thus invincible is its humble sister, the country of olive groves, vineyards

and springs, the earthly homeland of Christ and the Mother of God –
Palestine.

This is why the enemy tries to bring forth World War – to destroy Russia,
Christianity and mankind. We must stop them, right now!

Edited by Paul Bennett

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